Tea Industry in Assam

718. SHRI DWARK NATH DAS: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that the Tea Industry in Assam is in a critical position;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor, and the action proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard;

(c) the details of the sick tea gardens in the State; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to revitalise these sick tea gardens?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) The gradual increase in the production of Tea in Assam indicates that the Tea industry in Assam is not in a critical position.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) As per the recent survey carried out by the Tea Board there are 47 weak/sick and 5 closed Tea Gardens in Assam.

(d) Revival of the sick tea estates is primarily the responsibility of the respective owners. The Government is operating a number of developmental schemes through the Tea Board for improving productivity. Benefits under these can also be availed of by the owners of the Sick tea estates. Govt. have also asked the Tea Board to motivate private owners of such tea estates to prepare rehabilitation packages and secure loans for revival of their gardens.

Consumer Price Index

719. PROF. (SMT) RITA VERMA:
SMT. MAHENDRA KUMARI:
SHRI MAHESH KANODIA:
SHRIMATI KRISHNENDRA KAUR DEEPA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the figures of consumer price index as on December 31, 191;

(b) the purchasing power of rupee as on the above date; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by Government to bring down the rate of inflation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) The Consumer price index (CPI) for industrial workers (base; 1982=100) for December, 1991 was 225.

(b) The purchasing power of rupee measured as a reciprocal of the consumer price index for industrial workers (base: 1982=100) was 44 paise in December, 1991.

(c) The Government has taken a number of measures to check the inflationary pressure in the economy. These include: strict fiscal discipline through reduction in fiscal deficit and growth of money supply and bank credit against price-sensitive essential commodities, more effective management of supply and demand of essential/sensitive commodities and strict action against hoarders and profiteers. Incentives are being provided for raising production to ensure medium-term stability in prices.

Commission for handling bulk Fertilisers at Ports

720. DR. VISWANATHAM KANITHI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the system adopted by the Government for payment of commission or charges for handling bulk fertilisers at the factories and ports;

(b) whether there is any proposal to change the present system; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) Government invites tender each year for handling the imported fertilizer at the ports and its transportation and marketing to the consumers. The handling rates are finalised on the basis of the competitive tender and negotiation with a view to obtaining the lowest rate per tonne of material. As far as the indigenous fertilizer is concerned the cost of handling and transportation beyond the factory gate is paid by the Government as transportation subsidy worked out normatively.

(b) and (c). A proposal is under consideration to make the tender open even to units other than the fertilizer manufacturers. The matter is currently under process.

Expenditure on Government Machinery and Bureaucracy

721. SHRI RAMESHWAR PATIDAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether most of the available amount for developmental programme in the country is spent on the government machinery and bureaucracy;

(b) if so, the amount being spent every year on this machinery (non-planning item); and

(c) the steps being taken by the Government to curtail this expenditure?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SHANTRAM POTDUKHE): (a) and (b). In the Central Budget for 1991-92 developmental expenditure constitutes over 43 per cent of the total expenditure. Expenditure on wages and salaries amounts to 9.1 per cent of the total expenditure. The percentage of expenditure on wages and salaries is generally lower in respect of developmental expenditure.

(c) The Government is alive to the expenditure on wages and salaries, etc. in the development expenditure to the minimum necessary.

Assistance to Textile Labourers of Coimbatore

722. SHRI C.K. KUPPUSWAMY: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government are aware that due to the closure of so many textile mils in Coimbatore the labourers are suffering a lot; and

(b) if so, the action taken by the Government to provide relief to the labourers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT): (a) and (b). 8 Textile Mills (6 Spinning and 2 Composite Mills) were lying closed as on 31.1.92. Only one mill i.e. M/s Radhakrishna Mills Ltd., Coimbatore was eligible for relief for its workers under the Textile Workers' Rehabilitation Fund Scheme (TWRFS) of the Central Government. 1045 eligible workers of this mill have already been paid relief to the tune of Rs. 1.89 crore under TWRFS.

Reserved Posts for Ex-servicemen

723. SHRI BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state: